ESTABLISHED 1855.

THE AMERICAN COUNTESS

By ETTA W. PIERCE.

CHAPTER XVIII. A Tete-A-Tete.

It was in October, sombre and brown The trees in the park had donned Auaumn colors. The season was over, the watering-places were deserted. Crowde of pleasure-seekers, after dancing flirting, dressing and dining for many

"By mountain, stream and sea," had now fied cityward like flocks of are filled with the plebeian and unsummer birds. Belles were counting manageable blood of my pork-packing up their conquests, managing mam mas the result of their skill and labor Husbands and fathers were groaning over formidable bills. The shop-windows began to flame with hues like the autumn woods. The fashionable world had returned to its habitations and tathers were ground ground such cold-blooded society women as Mrs. Cullen Sardis. Ethel, do you know anything about Lawrence Harding?"

It was not a blush that arose to of brick and stone and mortar—to opera and ball reception and matinee, to the splendor and the dissipations between the splendor and the loved by Vanity Fair. Green fields and still. seas, moonlit piazzas, the song of

The day was dark and full of unpleasant drizzle. At intervals a genu-ine downpour broke from the gray Occlouds, and a mournful wind in the mountains." sighed round the corners of the streets and up and down Broadway. But a Ethel, "where are they? Evelyn Hardlittle boudoir in a certain brown-stone palace upon Fifth Avenue looked bright and cozy in spite of the weath-Rich eastern rugs dotted its parquet floor. The black Japanese furniture was upholstered in Louis Quinze rose satin. The walls were frescoed, and exquisite pictures, cabinets of gilt and ebony, costly bronzes and vases and when Lawrence arrived from Eurunning over with creamy tea-roses, adorned the place. On the tiled hearth burned a soft, flickering fire and drawn up before it in an attitude conductive to confidence and repose, sat two girls, chattering as only girls can chatter when they have been parted for many months, and are really fond of each

My dear child," said Ethel Sardis. moving a screen of embroidered rose satin betwixt her pearly face and the too ardent fire (she had landed in New too ardent fire (she had landed in New York with her mother just twenty-four stir in the world—I am sure that he hours before). "my dear, darling Bee hours before), "my dear, darling Bee, you have altered much since I saw you "For the better, I hope" answered

Bee, listlessly-Bee, whom Cullen Sardis had brought home from a safe retreat among the mountains to meet the returned travelers. "I am not quite sure. You have lost your wild-rose color, for one thing, mon enfant. You look pale and out of

spirits. Did you really enjoy Newport with the Vanns and the mountains with papa? Tell me about it. We have nothing to do for the next hour but exchange confidences." had changed in the last few weeks—she had lost flesh and color, will go everywhere" answered Bee, but gained in what people call style. A

posure, lately acquired, gave a new charm to her blonde loveliness "Oh, Newport was very well" said, with a vast show of carelessness "I love the sea, you know; but the mountains—I don't much care for mountains. It was very dull there Guardy was away a great deal—in Boston, on business, I suppose, though I never thought to ask him—and the people with whom he left me-old were greatly tried with me, I fear-l am sure I was with them. I yawned myself almost to death. I really should perish with ho sickness before guardy was ready to bring me to New York."

"I can't think why papa should have whisked you away from Miss Vann so rying him, my little ignoramus. What suddenly" said Ethel, leaning down to sort of a wife would I make for a smoothe a lap-dog that was sleeping on a rose-colored satin cushion before mamma in Paris which made her very angry—it was about you, though could not coax her to show it to me After that came a long letter, which mamma burned without giving me so as a glimpse at it; and then instead of spending a few weeks in London, as she had intended to do, she made her purchases—Oh, how cross she was, by-the-way!—had a fit of illness, as she always has when anything goes wrong—that de-layed us an entire fortnight! and bade adieu to our Paris friends in great vexation of spirit. Bee, I hope you did not go and lose your heart to any of those penniless young men of genius whom Miss Vann loves to gather around her hearthstone, and so fright en papa into snatching you away from their dangerous society.

By the hot color that surged up to Bee's temples, Ethel knew that her random shaft had struck home. She was half shocked, half amused-a eran belle may well be amused by frolics which she herself, had outgrown. The next moment, however, Bee ralli

"Bah!" she answered. "Like Madame Montespan, I mean that the strong Ethel's, a constraint, a reserve, new shall protect the weak—that my head and unpleasant. shall take care of my heart. Montespan? I might have said, Like quite as much truth, like Ethel Sardis been everywhere, you have seen every thing, and you are engaged to a count —what exhaustless subjects for conversation! Oh, Ethel, are you going

and heiress. She looked a trifle pale and fatigued after her ocean voyage but this seemed only to increase the perfect loveliness which had quite turndriven many another suitor, also,

the brink of despair.

"Really and truly, Bee! Behold the sign of my bondage!" and she held out her hand, blazing with a big diamon -Count Stahl's engagement ring.
"And you are very happy, Ethelyou love him very much, eh?" urge Bee, moving her chair nearer to her ry, society admires him; but to me he cousin and gazing at her inquisitivewith a pair of bright blue eyes. Ethel's pearly face never changed.

"Happy? Of course. Shall I not be a countess, with castles in Saxony, notel in Paris, wealth, honors and old-world splendor at my command? As for your other question, child, it is scarcely the kind which well-bred peoole propound to each other; but I will forgive you, because you are altogeth er unsophisticated. Love-matches are growing obsolete, my dear-only parvenu people make them nowadays; in-deed, I fancy that love itself is getting to be an old-fashioned disease. Its attacks are no longer of the virulent kind which the old novelists were fond

of describing—it is no longer necessary to a harmonious marriage." "Just as I thought!" said Bee energy; "you don't care a straw for the Ethel shrugged her beautiful shoul-

ders. "Don't jump at conclusions. Do you ead. It was Miss Beatrix, and none expect me to gush, my dear, like heroine of a three-volume novel? Heaven forbid! We'l-bred people never do such things. I respect the count; I admire his courtly manners, his elegance, his-title; and mamma assure me that this is quite enough. She likes the French system of marriage, and I am half inclined to like it, too. It relieves one of a great deal of trouble." "What outrageous talk!" cried Bee. her elbow on her knee, her chin on her dimpled hand, her blue eyes still fixed

on her cousin; "but you don't mean one word of it. Where is the count— when are you going to marry him?"

できるできるできるできるちゃんできるできるできるできる "We left him in Paris" answered other's scrutiny. "He will be in New York at an early date, I dare say—for

> proper for me to do so." "How dutiful!" said Bee, dryly. "Are all the daughters of Gotham as docile How abominable! What has come over you, Ethel? Aunt Amelia will not mold me to her wishes so easily. My veins grandpa. For my part, I prefer the gushing Amandas of the old novels to such cold-blooded society women as Mrs. Cullen Sardis. Ethel, do you

It was not a blush that arose

blue seas, moonlit piazzas, the song of birds, and the wash of warm waves in the sun, were now but things of the past.

I know that he returned to york weeks and weeks ago," she answered carelessly. "I suppose he has found employment before this time "I know that he returned to New has he not?"
"Yes, upon a daily newspaper. Miss Vann wrote me about him while I was

"Have you not heard" Evelyn was engaged to Jack Severne when the crash came which wrecked the Hard-He did not desert her, as all ings. worldly-wise worldly-wise people predicted he would do-no, he married her at once, rope, he found a pleasant sur awaiting him in the person of a brother-in-law. Guardy says that Jack Severne is very rich—that it will be a small matter for Evelyn to take care of all her kin now. But Lawrence chooses to provide for himself and his mother in his own way, and quite independent of Jack Severne. The two keep house in some obscure part of the city, and Larry drudges, as I have tolu you in a newspaper office. He has writhas talent."

arose from her chair, and stood at the corner of the hearth, look-ing down on its antique tiles, but not seeing them. Her bronze dark hair, her pearly throat, her long trained dress shone softly in the light.
Did her heart thrill at Bee's newsthe first which she had received of her rejected suitor since that parting in the old cathedral at Luzerne? "Then we are likely to meet the Hardings in society again," she said "Mamma thought they were all dead to the world, and safely buried beyond

resurrection. "and it's probable that she will someimes take her handsome brother with her, especially as she is said to be very fond of him. Ethel, dear, are you sure that you treated Lawrence just Were not you a little cruel to throw him over for the count, and when he was in such trouble, too? Betwixt his Betwixt his money losses and the loss of you, think the world must have seemed to him just then like a house of cards. stood up there on the hearth that luxurious boudoir, tall, white beautiful looking down on the younger

"What extraordinary questions ask. Bee! Cruel? Not at all! real cruelty would have been in mar sort of a wife would I make for newspaper scribbler? What sort of "He sent some message to for his daily bread? I did not throw him over, that is vulgar slang, and you an heiress and an embryo belle, must not use slang. I thanked him for the honor he would do me, and bade him s ourteous farewell."

girl with a faint, flitting color, and un

"Ethel, I fear you have grown very said Bee, solemn as an owl. "Did not you like Larry better than Fred Brad-ford or Archie Van Dorn, or any of the others that you have rejected?" Ethel laughed a low, sweet laugh that had, however, no mirth in it. "Good Heaven! what a catechism Does Mr. Harding know what a stanch

always liked him, of course; why not have known each other all lives. I wish him all possible good fortune in the future, and a wifesome one like yourself, Bee-true, and sweet, and loving; no worldly calcu-lating creature like me. I am glad that Evelyn has made a good marriage. I with her at the first opportunity. looked steadily at her

She was disappointed, she scarcely knew why. She felt that something ad come betwixt her own heart and and unpleasant. While she was pondering over natter Ethel spoke again.
"After all, my dear, you will find

Come, let us not talk of poor me, but that it is a fine thing to have a coun-of yourself, belle cousine. You have tess for a cousin. A season of triumph and splendor is before us. As for toilets I really have no words to describe the superb things that mamma ordered hunter in Paris. The count will be to marry him—really and truly?"

She leaned a little lower to caress attraction his titled presence will lend the dog—Ethel Sardis, beauty, belle to it! And apropos of all this, who is the Baron Strozzi that Miss Vann talk ed of so eloquently in her letters mamma? She mentioned that he adnired you greatly. Sly puss! ed the head of Lawrence Harding, and be that he is the person who frightend papa into whisking you away from Newport?"

The bantering tone brought the blood again to Bee's temples. "Baron Strozzi!" she echoed, her lue eyes flashing, "Ethel, I hate him Yes, Miss Vann thinks him a paragon of manly beauty and Old World chival move me beyond his fascinations, they were scarcely potent enough for that. Ethel surveyed this girlish, figure for a moment, then put her jew-eled hand under Bee's chin and turned her face up to her own.

"Bee you are actually keeping som secret from me. Since I went away something has happened to you of which I know nothing. You may as which I know nothing. You may as well tell me, for I shall soon find it out. Henceforth we are to live under the same roof, you know, and see each other daily."

Ethel always found more ominous than any outward sign of wrath; "that is ing to-night! I wish Eric Saxe was ing to-night! I wish Eric Saxe was one of the same roof, you know, and see each other daily."

And now neaveny Ethel is look-ing to night! I wish Eric Saxe was ing to-night! I wish Eric Saxe was one of the same roof, you know, and see each other daily."

And now neaveny Ethel is look-ing to night! I wish Eric Saxe was ing to-night! I wish Eric Saxe was ing to-night! I wish Eric Saxe was one of the same roof, you know, and see each other daily." Bee opened her red lips to speak, but

at that moment a page in buttons appeared at the door. The conversation and Mrs. Sardis war to the knife had his studio some day, that you may see and Mrs. Sardis war to the knife had his studio some day, that you may see how lovely you look upon canvas." was over. There were callers in the now begun. irawing-room, and Mrs. Sardis wished her niece to come down immediately. ' cried Bee: "oh. no. nade a mistake, Robin. Miss Sardis the person wanted."

But the little page shook his curly

"He is right I dare say-go down Bee," said Ethel, laughing. "I will see no one today; I have not yet recovered rom a week of seasickness. Who can have called in this pouring rain? So acquaintance of yours, or mamma vould not have sent for you."
"Bee's heart gave a great bound Could it be the person whom she most onged, yet most dreaded to see? flung a glance of consternation at the

Bee went down.

เสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเสดเส drawing-room, she found three persons The first was Mrs. Sar thin, cold, elegant, her aquiline face showing somewhat the ravishes of

time.
The second was a lady with a beardtoilet-Miss Charlotte Vann. The third person was Baron Strozzi. At sight of the noble Roman, Bee's first impulse was to turn and fly, but Her manner sorely puzzled Bee, who before she could do so Miss Vann was had her own girlish ideas in relation to embracing her with effusion, pressing engaged people. kisses that sounded like pistol-shots The impression on both cheeks, and crying:

pressly to see you. Observe the weather outside. Of course my coachman and horses will catch influenza, but I could not resist the desire to behol

Strozzi sprang up from his chair with one hand on his heart, and a flash of light in his black eyes. He made a deep obeisance to the little heiress, and vould have carried her hand to his lips but she drew it quickly back.

"This is an unexpected honor," she said, coldly. "I cannot imagine why Baron Strozzi should wish to see me."

"Ah, you are as cruel as ever," mured the baron in a low, tender tone.
"How could I hear zat you were in
New York, and not hurry to your side -I, who haf been in desolation, who haf thought of nothing but you ever since you vanished from Newport?" "I regret that you should waste you thoughts on such an insignificant and nappreciative subject," said Bee dry

"When you left Newport, Mees Bea trix," he went on, with a sublime in-difference to her snubbing, "ze place became to me like a desert without a ountain, a garden without a rose. could stay there no longer—I rushed away to friends in this city where, for ze last six weeks, I haf lived only in ze hope of meeting you again when ze season should open."

"Heaven grant that our meetings may be like angels' visits, few and far between," murmured Bee, in a voice to low for Mrs. Sardis's alert ear; and with an angry, disdainful glance, like a Parthian shaft, she leaned back in her chair of clouded tuya wood, inlaid with ivory and, like
"A rosebud set with little, wilful thorns."

refused to open her red lips to him

The baron turned his attentions from obdurate Bee to Mrs. Cullen Sardis, a change of base that spoke well for the man's shrewdness and cunning. "Madame,' he said, with his hand on his heart, "you haf been in Rome. Did you see there ze Strozzi palace on ze banks of ze Tiber?—my birthplace, ze birthplace of my family for centuries? My ancestors, madame, were in the senate with Caesar. Ah yes, we are very old. Many English people lodge in my palace now—artists, sculptors, Bohemians. It brings me a good rent. I haf vineyards, too, outside of Rome,

My beautiful Italy! Madame, my heart burns within me when I think of her." Mrs. Sardis did not remember the Strozzi palace—she had passed but a few days in Rome being mortally afraid of the fever-but she looked with calm, high-bred approval on the proprietor of that palatial lodging-house and the vineyards and olive-orchards, and was highly gratified to add him to her list of acquaintances.

olive-orchards.

As for Charlotte Vann her talk. usual, was mostly of art and artists, winter campaign of fashion With a wildly beating heart, Bee listened, hoping to hear the mention of Eric Saxe's name, but no! Miss Vany alluded to her favoritenever once hinted whether he was taill watching the blue waves at Newport or Aquidneck, or executing crayor heads in his Gotham studio. At last the two callers arose together to go. Miss Vann patted Bee's cheel

"My dear, you are as pale as a Ni-be," she said: "at the beginning of your first season, too! Come and my 'Hector and Andromache'—it finished quite to my satisfaction."
"Adieu, Mees Beatrix," whispered Strozzi, in her unwilling ear: "nothing shall make me angry with you; wheth er you treat me kindly or otherwise.

with one gloved finger.

am now and always your devoted Then he went, and Miss Vann also and Bee was left alone in the drawing room with Mrs. Cullen Sardis. There was a severity about that august lady's aquiline profile which boded no good to her niece.
"Sit down a moment" she said, point ing to a chair; "I wish to speak with

Bee obeyed. "You are my husband's niece and ward," began Mrs. Sardis, surveying the girl with a protesting air, "and as such it is my duty to look closely to your welfare. The air which you assumed toward Baron Strozzi just now was very rude, very offensive. Since a person of his importance has chosen to show you marked attention, it is my -yes, my command, that you re ceive it with becoming courtesy. hot, angry blood surged into Bee's cheek.

"Baron Strozzi! I cannot, Amelia!—don't ask me. I detest the man and his attentions!" "Your taste is as defective as are your manners. He is a most delightful person—he is also a nobleman. His unconcealed devotion to you an unfledged girl, is most flattering. Now listen to me. I shall do my utmost to secure for you an advantageous mar-riage—a husband of whom your Sardis relatives need not feel ashamed. I have heard of your Newpotr folly and I wish to say to you, Bee, that no obscure, penniless artist, no low fortunehunter shall ever wed my husband's ward, or control one do!lar of her money. Don't color like a milkkmaid; money. Don't color like a milkkmaid such violent tints are always unbe coming.

"Aunt Amelia, how dare you!"
"Hush! not a word more. I trust
that affair was an idle flirtation; let us call it such, at least. your nature Beatrix, and I expect you will give me trouble, but I am prepared for it; if you are wise, you will submit the baron be? I have been watching quietly to my control. Now there is but one thing more to say. It is this: wish you to accept Baron Strozzi as your lover.'

To have her secret uncovered in this manner-to know that either her uncl or Miss Vann had informed Mrs. Sardis of the summer idyl at Newport unbearable to poor Bee. She stamped on the rich carpet. "Never!" she answered, quite breath

less with wrath. "I hate Baron Strozzi! I will not treat him even with common ourtesy." Mrs. Sardis's thin face paled.

"You will not?—you defy me then? she said, in a low, even voice, tha tha Ethel always found more ominous than Bee went, with flashing eyes and

> CHAPTER XIX. Bee's First Ball.

fortnight later, Count Stahl arrived from Europe, and took up his quarters at a Fifth Avenue hotel. Society was all agog. The engage nent of the rich banker's only daughter was the latest sensation in the ashionable world. Rumors were rife concerning

ount's wealth, his vast domains in Saxony his hotel in Paris, his retinue so many male hearts in her own land. the envious ones acknowlare countess.

"Am I a fright, Ethel, dear?"

"Am I a fright, Ethel, dear?"

"Not at all," answered Ethel; and so pily or otherwise—had married titled to the smallest token of remembrance?

"The smallest token of remembrance?"

"The smallest token of remembrance?"

"The smallest token of remembrance?" Of all the fair Americans who-hap- or he would not paint her upon his can-

As she entered the great, sumptuous beauty or style this sole daughter of the patrician banker's house and heart. Cullen Sardis gave his prospective

on-in-law a gracious welcome. Mrs. Sardis was in a state of profound beatitude. Pthel received her betrothed with quie: grace. She was not a demonstrative person, and, with her thorough breeding, could not be expected to show any vulgar fondness for her future husband.

The impression made by the count upon this latter person was of a mixed character. His tall figure, his courtly address, his blonde, aristocratic face. with its sleepy blue eyes and thin, fair hair, met with her approbation, and yet she did not like him. Something in The in Paris" answered the best of the desire to be desir company. It must be that I am too

> titled people.' One bitter, winter night, when the stars were shining fair and frosty in entrance into the world of gavety and fashion, and danced at her first ball.
>
> It was a grand affair, given by the banker to celebrate simultaneously the arrival of the count and the debut of his rich young ward.

> From the basement to the roof the Fifth Avenue house shone with myriad lights. Flowering shrubs and vines wreathed the carved stairways and perfumed the landings. Baskets of daph nes and violets swung from every win dow and lintel. Great sprays and clusters of roses embedded the mantels and drooped, heavy with their own sweetness, from the chandeliers. Sevres vases, crowded with bolden-hearted orchids, scarlet passion-flowers, waxen camellias and hot-house geraniums, poured incense from every pedestal and corner. The superbly frescoed ballroom blazed with light, and re-sounded with the delicious music of Strauss's waltzes. Across its waxed floor moved crowds of notable people men in sombre evening dress women with jewels flashing, white bosoms gleaming, vaporous laces shining like hoar-frost. Looking from one gorge-ous apartment to another, through doorways draped in white and crimson silk, at the display of bedecked and dazzling humanity, visible between graceful sprays of leaves and blossoms, with here and there a mirror reflecting the scene, multiplying the light and in-creasing the delusion, the whole place seemed like a scene in fairyland.
>
> Bee stood, a pale young debutante, by the side of Mrs. Sardis, and looked

> with bewildered eyes upon this splen-dor. Her dress of tulle and silk shone about it save the pale-blue convolvulus which looped its exquisite folds. Her cheek was colorless but her eyes shone large and bright with exciten This was the hour for which she had longed-of which she had dreamed Did the reality equal the anticipation Scarcely—it rarely does in this life. For one thing, at least, she felt devoutly thankful—Baron Strozzi had not yet appeared—Strozzi, who was now the torment of her life, who perse cuted her with calls and attentions, quite indifferent to her detestation, so long as Mrs. Sardis encouraged suit. It was nearly eleven. He was late.
> "Heaven grant that he has broken his

legs!" thought Bee, wickedly, "or for-gotten the date of the ball, or taken offense, at last at my many gibes. Any Archie Van Dorn, a good-looking New Yorker, and one of Ethel's ardent admirers, led Bee out to dance. He thought her a pretty girl, fresh daisy-a sort of Charmian to the Cleopatra whom that sleepy-eyed count had

gobbled up. "By Jove! he's deuced devoted, is he not?" said Mr. Van Dorn, glaring re-sentfully at Count Stahl, as the latter gyrated by with his betrothed in his arms—he the lion of the night—the observed of all observers, with foreign orders on his breast, and a knot of violets in his button-hole; she, the belle of the ball, arrayed in cobweb lace over satin of the palest water-green tint, with lilies and pearls for ornaments. No color stained her face it was as coldly white as the camellias in the Sevres vases. The rufflet bronze hair, the downy skin, the lan The ruffled guishing eyes, the faultless contour had never seemed as lovely as on this night. Many a man looking on the count, envied him fiercely, and said to to himself that this peerless New York girl deserved not a coronet, but a crown, for her beauty.

"It's hard lines for her native-born dmirers, eh?" sighed Mr. Van Dorn. "Yes," assented Bee. "The count had no end of a row with Lawrence Harding at Lucerne. I was there at the time. Poor Harding! He was awfully cut up about your cousin. Wonder if he has yet recovered his peace of mind?"

Bee danced like a fairy, and partners clustered around her thick as bees From one figure to another she sped guardian, calmly surveying the com pany gathered in the gates—of Mrs. Sardis stately as an empress, in a dress of uncut velvet and black Chan-tilly lace, with diamonds that fairly dazzled the eyes; of Charlotte Vann in brocade and old point, surrounded by a group of admirers—for the wealthy, clever Miss Vann, bearded ugly and passee though she was, was a favorite with evrybody; of old Madame Vann, in crimson satin and priceless Brussels point; of Mrs Jack Severne Larry Harding's sister smiling bright in bride-like fleeces; of hun-dreds passing and repassing in gorgeous tissues and flashing jewels while the splendid measures of the music rose and fell, and the abundant light poured softly down the long rooms. At her own request, Bee's partner conducted her, at last, to a seat beside Miss Vann and went to bring her an

"You are enjoying it very much, you not, my dear?" said the latter, with a good-natured smile. "That is right. You look charming. Where can the door for the last hour." "I trust he is safe in some distant place!" answered Bee. "Fie! Without him your ball would struck. not be complete. He dances superbly and he is overwhelmed with invitations everywhere. En passant, has he ever

met Count Stahl?" said Bee; "though both honor is with frequent calls, they have thus far chosen different hours; so our titled friends have not yet made each other' Miss Vann leaned back in the shadow

around the ballroom.

"What color!" she murmured; "what light! And how heavenly Ethel is lookthat Eric is painting you as Elaine,
'The lily maid of Astolat.' hot, indignant heart. Betwixt herself Mrs. Sardis must let me take you to how lovely you look upon canvas." Bee's heart gave a hot suffocating bound. She had not heard that name for weeks and months, and the sound

of it went over her now like an electric "Me!-painting me!" she stammered scarcely knowing what she said. "You must be mistaken."
"Not all," answered Miss Vann, "It is easy to recognize your lightly. daisy face anywhere, my dear. Eric is really growing famous—he has sold many pictures this autumn. Good Heaven! how very pretty Evelyn Seof vassals and his absorbing love for verne, nee Harding, looks to-night, the belle and beauty who had shattered Where is her brother Lawrence?—he

ought to be here."

Bee could not see Evelyn Severneedged that Ethel Sardis would make a the whole ballroom was whirling before her eyes. He had thought of her, then,

"Did—did Mr. Saxe remain long at Newport after I left?" she stammered, twisting her costly fan in a ruinous manner about her nervous fingers. "He remained until October. You quarreled with him, did you not, be-

ore you went away?"
"Quarreled!" gasped Bee. "No."
"I feared you might have done so, beause, strangely enough he never once mentioned your name nor made any inquiry about your departure, which was sudden enough, you remember, to take away one's breath. However, a dinner yesterday, he spoke of you for

the first time—yes, he really asked if you were well." Bee grew red, then white.
"Did he, indeed?" she answered, bitterly. "How good of him! I am greatly
obliged. Ah! here comes Mr. Van Dorn
with an ice." Miss Vann nodded, and moved away

quite unconscious that she had turned all the joy of the night into dust and ashes for Bee.

He had never cared for her in the never once remembered her after she left Newport! Her heart sank like lead, weighed down with the bitter conusness that she had given too many thoughts to one who had not once thought of her.

"By Jove! how pale you are!" said Archie Van Dorn: "you're not ill, I hope, Miss Beatrix? Shall I go for smelling-salts? Shall I speak to your aunt?" No. she was not ill. The power dissemble, which seems inherent womankind, came to her aid.

'I fear I am a little giddy with

much dancing," she said, brightly; "and look at my smart lace flounce— Count Stahl stepped upon it and tore t quite in two. May I ask you to take me to the dressing-room?—I can dance no more until I am repaired."

She handed her ice, untasted, to a servant, and Van Dorn tucked her un-der his arm and sailed off with her

through the crowd.

Meanwhile Count Stahl had drawn his betrothed out of the hot ballroom into the cool dim conservatory, which chanced to be deserted as the two entered. In the centre of the place fountain played softly in a round basis bordered with emerald moss and vio-lets and daphnes. Tropic vines curled upward to the roof, their odorous flowers hanging midway, like gorgeous birds suspended in flight. Scarlet like cups of fire burned behind barricades of green. Colored lamps swung overhead, and Egyptian vases, crowded with the dusky splendor of heliotropes sent forth a stifling fragrance from every side.

In her rich ball-dress, with the nearl gleaming in her bronze hair and on her marble throat. Ethel stood in the rose hued light of the place, fairer, statelier than any exotic which it held. With adoring eyes Count Stahl looked down upon her—this fair American, whom he had coveted at Baden-Baden, won at Lucerne, and crossed the sea to wed now in the New World.
"I fear you are sadly bored with so many new acquaintances," said Ethel,

with a faint, sweet smile.

"On the contrary," answered the count "it is a delight to meet your friends. They all adore you, I see they are madly envious of me. That is not strange. One person, however, whom I expected to meet here to-night, has not yet made his appearance." She looked up quickly

"I mean Monsieur Harding." All her self-possession, and she had great deal of it, could not keep the d rushing into her cheek. reached and plucked a spray of heliotrope from a vase overhead.
"No—he is not here." jealous still of his former rival.

"Hrace you met him since your return from Europe, Ethel?" "No," she coldly answered; "I think he goes but little into society now. He ravenous has become poor; he is working for his daily bread. You do not compre-The count smoothed his waxed mus

taches with one white-gloved hand. Very haughty and handsome he looked in his orthodox evening-dress, with the foreign orders glittering on his broad "Scarcely," he replied: "I was bor above such comprehension. You have heard of Mr. Harding, then, if you have not seen him? Ah, heaven! Do you think of him-do you remember him

with kindness, perhaps regret?" Her beautiful face grew chilly and surprised.
"Those are strange questions to ask of me," she said, with a hauteur that recalled him at once to his senses. "Is it strange," he cried, wildly, "that I, who regard you with adoration, should dislike to think that another man has loved you.

A faint, cold smile flitted over her

"Many men have loved me," she an swered frankly. "But not as Harding did." "Perhaps not," she murmured, with something like a smothered sigh; "whatever Lawrence finds to do, be i wise thing or foolish one, he does

with all his might." The count gnawed his long mus-taches. "Forgive my jealousy," he pleaded, "for the sake of the passion which has made me your slave. If I adored you less I should be less fearful of losing you. Thank heaven, the time is at hand when you will be mine irrevocably-

when"— He paused abruptly. A step sounded near by on the floor of the conservatory. A man had entered the place, and was eagerly looking around it as if in search of some onea tall, swarthy man in faultless evening dress-one of the guests of the night.

Ethel turned and held out her hand with a smile. "You are late, baron," she said. "We feared you had forgotten us." ture. "Forgotten! Oh, impossible. I was detained by unexpected business. May

I ask if your fair cousin, Mees Beatrix, is anywhere about?" Then his eyes fell upon Count Otto standing just behind Ethel, with the light falling on his blonde face his decorated breast, his imposing figure. The glib tongue of the baron seeme suddenly to freeze to the roof of his mouth; a strange, livid hue overspread his pock-marked face. He started as i

"Baron Strozzi," said Ethel, "alloy me to present you to Count Stahlhouse before." Where were the count's manners? He spoke not a word, he did not ever

His blonde face was as livid a bow. His bi He, too, recoiled a step and dashing back his gloved hand, as if he was of a crimson silk curtain, and looked about to strike at something, he dislodged the jar of heliotropes from its place by his side, and down it came crashing to the floor with all its odorous contents. When Ethel looked again, the two titled gentlemen were standing with the shattered vase between them glar

ing over its fragments at each other in a very odd, threatening way. The baron was the first to recover "Monsieur le comte." he said, recoil ing step by step, as if from the vicinity of something dangerous, "I salute you! Pardon, Miss Sardis, with your per-mission I will continue my search for your enchanting cousin.' He wheeled quickly, and went out o the place like a shot. Ethel looked at her betrothed.
"You have met the baron before?

she said. "Never!" he answered in a voice that seemed a little hoarse and constrained, "who is the fellow?"
"A Roman by birth, and a lion of New York society by accident," she re-plied, with a faint smile. "Papa and my cousin made his acquaintance at Newport last summer while I was abroad. Entre nous, he is Bee's ar-The count drew his breath hard.
"And he is a baron, you say?"

"Yes, with great estates in or near Rome. Let us go back to the ballroom. It is near twelve o'clock—the hour for

upper." Meanwhile that late arrival, Baron Strozzi, was diving hither and thither among the crowd searching for Beatrix and finding her not. Finally, in passing the open door of a dressing-room, he pale and weary, her gloved fingers plucking absently at her bouquet, while on the floor beside her knelt a coffeecolored woman in a white colored woman in a white cap and apron, arranging the lace on the sweeping train of the young debutante's dress. The person thus employed was dress. The person thus employed was field I read the proceedings in the sen-Finette, Mrs. Sardis's French maid. As ate upon the subject of Senator Till-the baron paused on the threshold to man's letter. I am not at all concernthe baron paused on the threshold to stare in at the unheeding girl whose

thoughts were far, very far away from all the festivity of the night, Finette lifted her head and saw him there—a black, portentous shadow, stretching up toward the lintel of the door. She saw him and, strange to say, the sight eemed quite as unpleasant to Mrs. Sardis's waiting-maid as it had been a few : Stahl. moments before to Count Otto

"Mon Dieu!"
Those two syllables, mingled with a stifled shriek of terror, rank suddenly through the room. The needle dropped from Finette's brown fingers, she crouched down be-hind Bee's shimmering figure in a

frightful, palpitating heap. "Good heaven! Finette, what is the matter?" cried Bee, turning sharply. The needle, mademoiselle, it entered my hand," answered Finette in a erce whisper, and with her dark face half buried in the girl's dress. "Look, some one is at the door; look!" And Bee looked, and beheld the very

inwelcome face and figure of Baron Strozzi. Finette did not attempt to rise from he floor; in that attitude she was wellnigh concealed from the baron's sight. She cast the lace flounce wildly from her hand.
"Go, mademoiselle," she murmured.

with white lips; "it is done. He waits for you—go quickly!" Bee walked to the threshold, saluting he baron with a cold bow. "Oh, you are here, then!" she said, in He smiled as serenely as if she had given him the warmest of welcomes. "Behold me, Mees Beatrix."

"I hoped—that is, I thought you "Nothing but death could keep me rom you tonight. I am inconsolable to find myself late. How charming you look—how fair! You dazzle my eyes. Your good aunt commands zat I take you to supper."
"I am sorry to disobey my aunt's command," said Bee, drawing coldly

back, "but I have already accepted another escort. Here is Mr. Van Dorn coming for me even now." And as the gentleman thus named appeared upon the landing, Bee slipped her slim hand through his arm and walked quietly off to supper.

Never glancing into the dressing room, where the brown waiting-maid had scrambled to her feet and was

making off in undisguised terror

through an opposite door, Baron Stroz-zi hastened to find a substitute for Beatrix in the person of Miss Charlotte Twelve o'clock had struck, and the doors of the superb supper-room were standing wide open. Thither rushed

the banker's guests like a crowd of lo custs. The long tables glittered with crystal, gold and silver plate, and groaned with French wines and French viands was champagne, game of marvelous quality, spiced meats and pastries, pate de foie gras, fantastic confections, costly violent exercise, and it engenders a ravenous appetite. Bee, sheltered somewhat by Archie Van Dorn, devoured her salad and boned turkey, heeding hend the meaning of those words, I as little as possible Mrs. Sardis's cold, disapproving looks, and the burning glances cast upon her continually by

Baron Strozzi. The tables were crowded with merchant-princes, foreign consuls, million-aires, fair women with reddened faces caked with pearl-powder, all chatting, laughing, eating fiercely after dancing like dervishes.

Opposite Bee was Madame Vann, in her gorgeous crimson satin, covered with Brussels point. Our heiress watched her for a moment, then whispered wickedly to Van Dorn:
"What is that strange beverage which madame is drinking?—she has just

emptied her third glass."

Van Dorn looked, meditated, smiled.

"It is a mixture of brandy, green tea, rum, soda-water, champagne, sugar and broken fruit," he answered, "and it s called—punch. "Is it intoxicating?"

Mrs. Sardis caught her niece's eye and leaned suddenly toward her. "I wish you to reserve two dances for Baron Strozzi," she said, calmly. "Excuse me, aunt"-

"Impossible! I will take no denial." Bee toyed with her claret cup. "Very well," she murmured: "I will "Very well," she murmured: "I wild dance like a Moenad if you desire it You can force me to do many unpleas ant things, Aunt Amelia, but the force ng only makes your purpose more nateful to me—don't you know?"
Vis-a-vis at the same table were the two titled lions of the night, but they might have been two statues for all the heed which they gave to each other. Count Otto devoted himself entirely to his beautiful betrothed; the baron chatted with Miss Vann and watched Bee. In truth, the pair seemed little inclined to cultivate an acquaintance.
"By Jove! look at them," whispere Van Dorn to Beatrix; "one would nat-urally think that such blue-blooded ellows would rush straight into each other's arms. It looks like a clear cas of natural antipathy, eh?" But when the enticing strains

the german began to call, when the sacrowd poured back to the ballroom, in the passage thereto the count and Baron Strozzi met, and, under rieties occur as well as the shelter of the swelling music, the rus-rieties occur as well as the black. Like the ass also, the buffalo black. Like the ass also, the buffalo is a despised animal, yet in local utiliar avenues is a despised animal, yet in local utiliary avenues their more 'In God's name, how came you here?

said Count Stahl. "In the devil's name, you mean, monsieur le comte. It is a long story. dare not tell it-I might be over "I have a mind to speak and denounce you to this company. V

"Because you might find it bad for yourself as well as for me, monsieur. A noment's reflection will convince you hat I have deserved something better t your hands."
The count grew livid. "Come to my hotel tomorrow-I will alk with you there."

He slipped a card into the baron' "Very good, monsieur le will wait upon you at an early hour."

The two separated the ball went on.
They did not exchange another word or ook that night; but it was plain that Count Otto had lied to Miss Sardis when in the conservatory, he declared Roman. Verily Baron Strozzi was ar old acquaintance!

(To be continued.) The Pa, what is a rara avis?

think he's going to get some sort

"A Democrat, my son, who doesn't

job soon."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

** Knicker—Have you a library? Bocker-Yes; a check book, book and a dictionary for the baby to sit on.—New York Sun. "Well, wasn't he a great Dane?" Baltimore American. it guarantees every graduate a posi-tion it is bound to become the most popular institution of learning in the country.—Cleveland Plain Dealer. clover, turned the clover under, ma-nured the land plentifully, and then planted potatoes. The eight acres produced more than 2,000 bushels server.

Miscellaneous Beading.

MR. ABNEY IS NOT RUFFLED

Noted Lawyer Submits Courteous Re ply to Senator Tillman's Attack.

of Richland. It is as follows: Dear Sir: On my return from Edge ed with the disposition, of the controversy between him and Gov. Blease, but I feel that I, in some way ought to express my sense of indignation at the deliberately unfounded statement made by him with reference toward myself and my conduct towards the members of the senate.

How Senator Tillman could make such

understand. He has no warrant from any information of the facts that he has, to indulge in any such charges. It is purely a creature of his own imagination, engendered, doubtless, by per-sonal venom towards some individuals. Individually I care nothing for charges so ill-conceived and unfounded as this, and would pass them by unnoticed, but my regard for the feelings of senators, both of former and of the present legislature, and for their good opinion, requires that I should make some expression, in some appropriate way, so that they may feel that I participate in they may feel that I participate in is hardly necessary to say that this their sense of indignation against such distracted man demonstrated his love

There is not a senator upon the floor for the dead wife and mother by ed him in any way on the discussion of pending measures other than at comattended the lobby, or interviewed sen-ators upon pending questions while the legislature was in session and other than above stated. There is not a single senator who does not feel the consciousness of my never having at-tempted to influence his actions unduly or by any other means than arguments presented to the committees, orally or in writing. I regret that a man so high placed as Senator Tillman, could dream, much less charge, of such con-duct upon the part of senators and duct upon the part of senators and upon part of one who was attempting to fairly and justly and honorably represent the interest in his charge, and who never had been in his way politically, and who had never taken any part in any controversy, political or otherwise antagonistic to his personal

feelings or to his personal interest.
As stated above, I have no desire do anything more than to inform the senators with whom I have the honor to be acquainted, that I feel the same indignation as they do against such charges, and I would thank you, if you could in some appropriate way, convey this information to them.

Yours very truly, B. L. Abney.

BUFFALO AS BEAST OF BURDEN

the Tiger Fears. though well known as a domestic an-imal in the East, is very unfamiliar to Western eyes—the buffalo. If buffalo. If to Western eyes—the buffalo. Il mentioned at all this beast is gener ally thought of as a savage brute, but in the war area we find him, says The London Standard, doing duty as a transport annual equally with the fa-miliar ox, from which he is easily distinguished in the illustrations by his low set down-curving horns, and muzzle carried almost straight for-

ward. People who have to travel by buffalo cart are to be pitied, for the buffalo is the slowest of all beasts of draught. It is his great strength that gives him the advantage over the ox. The load that a single yoke of buffaloes will pull is something astounding, and in India they are always given the kind of load which is assigned to dray horses here, ordi-nary horse work—except passenger traffic—being there performed by the imped oxen known over here as

India, indeed, is the native home of the buffalo, and it still exhists there as a wild animal. Very wild indeed it is, too, and an old bull is very apt him out, which they will do to a certainty if they get on his scent. Even tame buffaloes can make themselves very unpleasant to people they do not know, and they are not at all safe for a European to ap-proach in India, but—aud here the more attractive side of their character comes out—they display toward their owners a faithfulness one usually associates rather with dogs

ith cattle. The true Indian buffalo is really to great extent an aquatic animal, and then off on duty likes nothing so much as to lie up to its ears in water, but the duck, it can if necessary resign itself to existance without a bath That an animal so nearly naked of skin as it is should thrive in so cold climate as is that of eastern Europe is a remarkable fact of acclimaization.

Its presence in Italy is less surprising, but even there its introduction seems to be merely of mediaeval date. Scientifically the tame buffalo is of interest as having, like the ass, va-ried so little from the wild type. Pied buffaloes are as rare as pied donkeys, aristocratic relatives, the horse and while in intelligence and force character they are certainly far superior.

Champion Potato Grower,-G. W. Orpin of Swannanoa, N. C., grows potatoes, and he exhibited such good potatoes at the Buncombe county fair last year that he was given as a prize, a free trip to the Corn exposition. He finds something of interest in every feature of the show, but it is of potatoes that he would rather talk than anything else. Mr. Orpin is a Canadian and come from a section of Canada where po-tatoes are the principal crop. He was born in Nova Scotia, where the sea-son of warm weather is too short to permit corn to reach its full growth,

but where potatoes grow admirably.

Mr. Orpin came to North Carolina
about a year ago and bought a farm. He made inquiries about growing po-tatoes and found that in North Carolina the varieties commonly grown were Early Rose, Burbank In Nova Scotia they don't think much of these varieties, according to Mr. Orpin. They only raise Red Bliss tubers to feed the hogs or sell for starch. So Mr. Orpin sent up to Aroostoock county, Maine, and got a carload of Green Mountain and Irish Cobbler These varieties potatoes for seed. he says, are "some potatoes," and when an Irish Cobbler is properly cooked it bursts open and displays

food for a king. Mr. Orpin planted eight acres in

With ne says, there is no reason why South Carolina should not raise as good po

TERMS----\$2.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE.

The High Cost of Dying.

State.

One cannot go among the poor ery much without hearing more or less circumstantial stories of how the unscrupulous undertaker fleeces them. In fact, nothing less than ghoulish are some of the stories that are related to show how pressure is brought to bear on distracted people to cause

them excessive expense in burying

their dead.

A dying husband begged his wife

that she give him only a plain fun-eral. She promised; but when the undertaker came, relatives wanted only a modest funeral foolish statement I am at a loss to inderstand. He has no warrant from like that?" She was shamed into like that?" She was shamed spending not only more than she promised, but more than the "This is the last thing you can do for your wife," one undertaker urged a poor porter, "and you don't want to be haunted by the thought that you were mean." Then the crafty tradesman in death pointed to the children and cruelly wrung the man's heart by adding, "if you don't do the right thing by their mother they will curse you to their dying day." I

having a funeral which condemned who can be shown as the compending measures other than at compending measures other than at committee meetings and in attendance thereon, by way of presentation of the views of the interests affected by the bills before the committees, and the bills before the committees, and the crucifix, an heirloon, as security. Such cases could be multiplied if it were of any use. Mr. Barrows remarks that this is not the very poor as to be almost proverbial. That is as to be almost proverbial. That is not to say that all undertakers, or even a majority of them, are rogues. They are precisely like every other body of men—some honest, some unscrupulous, charging "all that traffic will bear."

Once having been accepted, the vulture undertaker has the family at his mercy. For instance, in one case a chattel mortgage on all the house hold furniture was demanded. The family refused indignantly. But when they approached a second undertaker they approached a second undertaker they found he would not take the case because the code of ethics for-bade him. They either had to take the original undertaker on his own terms or submit to having a pauper burial.—Harper's Weekly.

Democratic Dulness,-Guglielmo Ferrero, is a vivid talker, and what he says shocks the listener to fresh thought. He once remarked: "People forget that the lower classes are essentially conservative. In the past they have not been revolutionary. The most daring attempt in history to lay hold of the external world and shake it was the French revolution, and that was conducted by an oligarchical handful. It has always been a little knot of aristocrats who have made the ultrain Balkan War-Fighter That radical attempt. The masses will not do anything extravagent. We are witwith French wines and French viands war in the Balkins have brought into perhaps continue for another fifty war in the Balkins have brought which years. The moral and the economic conditions of the middle and lower classes will be bettered, but I fear for the intellectual life of society. The in-tellect has expanded it would seem, under the aristocratic regime." The daring Churchill in English politics is an in-stance of one of the masters of life laying hold of the external world and shaking it. But Lloya-George is just as ultraradical, and he came out poverty. And does the intellectual life of society necessarily expand more am-Victorian era was a quickened time in letters and in science. Thought flour-ished and took command of things as never since the days of Elizabeth.
And that, too, was more a people's time in its widespread activity. Is less movement of the intellect less movement of the intellect when the race reaches out for justice? Will the abolition of child labor quench the minor poets? Will the scientists probe less deeply while working girls are winning a living wage and a measure of happiness? Will the rise of the Progressive party taint our young idealists?-Collier's.

"By Jove! I rather guess so! It would be well to station a footman somewhere near the old lady, to catch her when she begins to slip under the table. Look! your aunt wishes to speak to you."

Mrs. Sardis caught her niece's eye High License for Charleston.-The to bolt when he has taken cover is to drive in a herd of buffaloes to rout license at \$1,000. There was considerable debate on the bill, the main argument being that Charleston is not entitled to privileges that denied to the balance of the state. On second reading a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill was killed 66 to 45 as follows

J. W. Ashley, Atkinson, Baskin, Bel-

ser, Bethea, Bowers, Boyd, Browning, Brice, W. E. Laughton, Epps, Evans,

Friday, Fripp, Gasque, Greer, Haynes-worth, Hiott Hunter, Hutchinson, Hut-

son Irby, Jones, Kibler, McCravey, Mc-Donald, McQueen, Malpass, Means, Mower, Nelson, Nicholson, Pegues, Ready, Riddle, Riley, W. M. Scott, W. W. Scott, Sherwood, Shirley, White, Whitehead, Wyche, Youmans and Speaker Smith. Total 45.
The nays were as follows: Ashley, M. J., Barnwell, Blackwell, Busbee, Clowney, Creech, Cross, Daniel, Dick Fortner, Goodwin, Gray, Haile, Hall, Hardin, Harrelson, Harvey, Holley, James, W. A., James W. E., John-ston, Kelley, Kirby, Kirk, Lee, Lump-kin ,Lybrand, McMillan, Massey, Melfl, ly, Murray, Odom, O'Quinn, Pyatt, tembert, Rittenberg, Robertson, Robinson, Rogers, L. Rogers, W. S. Sapp, Schroder, Senseney, Sn Stanley, Strickland, Sturkie, Thompson, Tindal, Vanderhorst, Walker, Warner, Warren, Welsh, Whaley, Wilburn Williams, Wyche. Total, 66.

- New York, January 28: One of the largest bequests ever made missionary work is disclosed in an appraisal of the estate of Robert Arthington of England, which was filed with the surrogates court yester-day. Although the value of the estate is not given, the personal prop-erty alone is appraised at \$4,593,000, practically all of which is left to two London missionary societies—the Baptist Missionary society and the ndon Missionary society. directs that the money be used rigiving to every tribe of mankind that has them not and which speaks a language distinct from all others, accurate and faithful copies of at least the Gospel of St. John and the Gospel of St. Luke, together with the book of Acts of the Apostles, printed in the language of that tribe." The will further prescribes that at least 10 or 12 persons of each tribe be taught to

Holding Up Confirmations,-Bad feeling has been aroused over the efforts of the Democrats in the senate to hold up the nominations made by President The Republicans say that in the extra session they will have their innings when it will be possible for them to give trouble by holding up President Wil-son's cabinet confirmations, which they can do. It may be a bluff, or it may not be; but the Democrats might just as well go on and hold up everything they can, for the Republicans will give as whether the Democrats fall down stand up before them.-Charlotte Ob-